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1- Waste pits watchdogs react to news of EPA resignation, Baytown Sun, 07/06/2018

http://baytownsun.com/news/article_949c737a-80cb-11e8-be07-f3e85244561f.html

While many people are content embattled Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt resigned Thursday amid dozens of scandals, local environmentalists are thankful for the work and effort he contributed to the San Jacinto River Waste Pits.

2- EPA Announces Plan to Clean Bristow Superfund Site, CBS Channel 6, Tulsa, 07/06/2018

<http://www.newson6.com/story/38590414/epa-announces-plan-to-clean-bristow-superfund-site>

The Environmental Protection Agency said it now has a plan to clean up an old oil refinery site in Bristow. Residents there said they are more than ready for the help.

3- Acting EPA Chief Plans to Stick with Trump's Priorities, Wall Street Journal, 07/06/2018

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-epa-chief-plans-to-stick-with-trumps-priorities-1530919299?mod=searchresults&page=1&pos=2>

The acting head of the Environmental Protection Agency said Friday he plans to stick with President Donald Trump's priorities, including changing the Clean Power Plan, de-emphasizing climate-change initiatives and improving how the agency deals with polluters and environmental crises.

4- EPA Puts Brakes on Enforcement of Truck Pollution Limits

<https://news.bloombergenvironment.com/environment-and-energy/epa-puts-brakes-on-enforcement-of-truck-pollution-limits?context=landing-heroes>

The EPA is giving trucks with rebuilt engines a break from meeting Obama-era air pollution limits that the agency has sought for months to kill—but officials aren't giving up on the repeal efforts just yet. The Environmental Protection Agency won't enforce a 2016 regulation placing a cap on the production and sale of glider kits—new truck chassis and cab assemblies built for used engines and transmissions—for a year, until July 6, 2019, agency enforcement chief Susan Bodine wrote in a July 6 memo posted on the agency's website July 9.

5- Victoria experiences 20 degraded air quality days in 2016

https://www.victoriaadvocate.com/counties/victoria-experiences-degraded-air-quality-days-in/article_eb68232e-83ab-11e8-acbf-2b8c261981ba.html

Victoria experienced 20 days of degraded air quality in 2016, according to a new report by Environment Texas Research and Policy Center. Specifically, people inhaled smog and microscopic particles that contained toxic chemicals.

6- 42 homes and business could be dealing with contaminated groundwater in Odessa

<http://www.ktre.com/story/38604395/42-homes-and-business-could-be-dealing-with-contaminated-groundwater-in-odessa>

On Monday, the Environmental Protection Agency updated Ector County Commissioners on chromium contaminated groundwater. The EPA says about 42 homes and business could be dealing with potential contaminated groundwater in the area of Brazos Street. Chromium is odorless and colorless, but it can be very harmful if it is used as drinking water.

7- Truck crash spills more waste from Colorado mine into creek

<https://www.kansas.com/news/business/article214596750.html>

A truck hauling waste from a Colorado mine — the source of a 2015 spill that polluted rivers in three states— crashed into a creek on Monday, spilling at least some of its load into the water, authorities said. The driver was not seriously injured, but about 9 cubic yards (7 cubic meters) of sludge spilled into the water, officials said.

8- Plan Calls For More Aggressive Water Planning In State, Management Change Begins At LANL

<http://kunm.org/post/plan-calls-more-aggressive-water-planning-state-management-change-begins-lanl>

New Mexico's supply of groundwater should be reserved for periods of drought, communities should have sharing agreements in place when supplies are short and alternatives such as desalination should be explored regardless of the cost. The recommendations are part of the state's draft water plan released late Monday. The public will have 30 days to comment on the lengthy document.

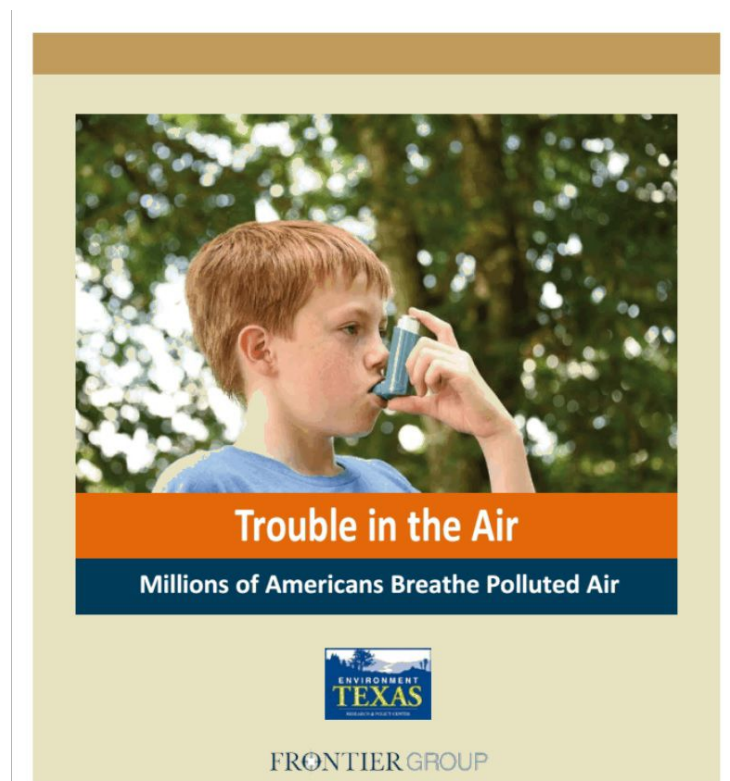
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TOP STORY

Environment

Victoria experiences 20 degraded air quality days in 2016

By Jessica Priest | jpriest@vicad.com Jul 9, 2018 Updated 11 hrs ago



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Victoria experienced 20 days of degraded air quality in 2016, according to a new [report](#) by Environment Texas Research and Policy Center.

Specifically, people inhaled smog and microscopic particles that contained toxic chemicals.

This can lead to respiratory and cardiovascular problems, and children and the elderly are the most at risk, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

For perspective, the next city ahead of Victoria in population size, Texarkana, had 25 days of degraded air quality, while the next-largest, Marshall, had 23, according to the report.

Environment Texas Research and Policy Center, along with the Frontier Group and TexPIRG Education Fund, determined the number of degraded air quality days by identifying the highest of what the EPA calls an “air quality index” score for each metropolitan area’s air monitoring station for each day to obtain a single reading per location.

Then, they counted the number of those days with a score of 50 or above, which is considered a moderate health concern, and divided that by the total number of monitoring stations that reported that day. Finally, they tallied the number of days on which half or more monitoring stations in that area reported a score of 50 or above.

Victoria has one monitoring station at 106 E. Mockingbird Lane.

“We improved our methodology for this year’s report, so its 2016 data can’t be compared to the 2015 data in our previous report,” said Brian Zabcik, who works for Environment Texas.

He said he was not surprised by how many days of degraded air quality Victoria had, but he was disappointed.

“There’s no safe number of bad air days for children and adults with respiratory problems,” Zabcik said.



AIR QUALITY INDEX TABLE

The report's publication coincides with the [expiration](#) of a \$350,000 air quality program grant Victoria has received from the state for years.

Daryl Lesak, the city's director of environmental services, said Victorians will see and hear fewer PSAs about air quality, but his staff will continue to update its Facebook page and do programs for schoolchildren when requested.

Lesak said the city's air quality index score has not been above 63 a day for about a decade. He didn't have the reaction to the 20 days of degraded air quality that Zabcik did partly because the grant allowed him to learn Victoria isn't causing most of its degraded air quality.

"Chances are, depending on the month, it could blow in from Mexico; from the northern U.S.; or even somewhere as close as Houston, San Antonio or Austin," Lesak said.

He said he doesn't think Victoria will ever see that \$350,000 again and is looking for other funding sources.

"I think the state is concentrating on big cities that are in non-attainment. If those big cities' air quality is improving, we'll reap the benefit of that," he said

Later, Lesak added, "We're not giving up on it. We're continuing to educate on it because it's important for people to understand."

The report's publication also coincides with a leadership change at the EPA.

Thursday, Scott Pruitt resigned as EPA Administrator amid several ethical scandals. Monday, his deputy and a former coal lobbyist, Andrew Wheeler, has stepped up in the meantime.

Since the most recent data indicates that 60 percent of air pollution comes from burning gasoline, diesel, coal and other fossil fuels for transportation, the authors of the report are calling on Wheeler and President Donald J. Trump to not weaken federal fuel economy standards as well as to respect the states' power to adopt stronger pollution standards for passenger vehicles.

Jessica Priest reports on the environment and Calhoun County for the Victoria Advocate. She may be reached at jpriest@vicad.com or 361-580-6521.

Number of degraded air quality days for other cities

- Amarillo: 44
- Austin-Round Rock: 46
- Beaumont-Port Arthur: 19
- Brownsville-Harlingen: 32
- Corpus Christi: 42
- Corsicana: 22
- Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington: 72
- El Paso: 119
- Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land: 85
- Killeen-Temple: 34
- Longview: 30
- Marshall: 23
- McAllen-Edinburg-Mission: 32
- San Antonio-New Braunfels: 25
- Texarkana: 25
- Tyler: 24
- Waco: 10
- Source: Environmental Texas Research and Policy Center

MORE INFORMATION



Report: Texas worst for excessive water pollution

Jessica Priest

Senior Reporter

Jessica Priest has done a little bit of everything since moving to Victoria in 2012. She was a regular fixture in the Crossroads' historic courthouses, but now slathers on the sunscreen to report on the environment.



Waste pits watchdogs react to news of EPA resignation

Christopher James Jul 6, 2018 0



There is optimism among local leaders the EPA will move forward with work at the waste pits after the resignation of administrator Scott Pruitt.

File photo

NEXT UP



Future of old bank building discussed
City officials have presented four options to preserve the o...

While many people are content embattled Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt resigned Thursday amid dozens of scandals, local environmentalists are thankful for the work and effort he contributed to the San Jacinto River Waste Pits.

“I am saddened to see him go as he was the first administrator in a long time to make decisions no matter who he had to stand up to,” Jacquelyn Young, director of the Texas Health and Environmental Alliance, said.

“What people aren’t understanding is that whether the EPA Administrator is Scott Pruitt, or anyone else, they are primarily carrying out the agenda of the President. Scott Pruitt is the first person in his position in at least the seven years I’ve been working with the waste pits, to actually put his boots on the site, meet with local people, and stand up for the best remedy.”

Soon after Pruitt took the helm, he visited the waste pits site after Hurricane Harvey to better understand the dangers associated with its proximity to the river. Before leaving, Pruitt, who is an Oklahoma native, made a promise to Young and Scott Jones of the Galveston Bay Foundation a cleanup remedy would be approved before the University of Texas and Oklahoma University played their fall football classic. Pruitt made good on the promise and signed off on the excavation of almost 212,000 cubic yards of dioxin-contaminated material for disposal. The estimated cost for the remedy is \$115 million and will take about 29 months to complete.

With Pruitt’s resignation, environmentalists are confident the EPA will stick to its final cleanup plan, called a Record of Decision.

“I will always have a level of concern until the wastes are removed, as the river, the bay won’t be safe until they are out of the water and hurricane storm surge and flooding areas,” Jones said. “However, I trust that the EPA will stick to the plan to remove the wastes as was developed by the EPA under the prior administration and then fully supported by the EPA under the current administration through its official Record of Decision.”

“I appreciate that Scott Pruitt visited the site on September 15, 2017, and then met with Jackie Young and me just outside the site’s gates that same day,” he added. “He provided the site the attention that it deserved.”

Young also believes the EPA will stay true to its remedy for the waste pits and is grateful for Pruitt’s effort to clean up the dioxin-laden pits that have plagued the San Jacinto River since the mid-1960s.

“Administrator Pruitt listened and implemented things our community asked for that were very much needed at the waste pits,” Young said. “At the last (Community Advisory Committee) meeting the possibility of Pruitt leaving was discussed, and the career EPA guys that have been through many administration changes said they do not anticipate any changes in the administration to impact our site.”

(0) COMMENTS

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Be Truthful. Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.

Be Nice. No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.

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EPA Announces Plan To Clean Bristow Superfund Site

Posted: Jul 06, 2018 6:02 PM CDT Updated: Jul 06, 2018 6:12 PM CDT

BY: JUSTIN SHRAIR, NEWS ON 6 [BIO](#) [EMAIL](#)



BRISTOW, Oklahoma - The Environmental Protection Agency said it now has a plan to clean up an old oil refinery site in Bristow.

Residents there said they are more than ready for the help.

The EPA said the superfund site is on about 140 acres of land. It's the former home of Lorraine and Wilcox Oil Refineries, which operated from 1915 to 1965.

Wanda Edson lives just down the road.

"In the beginning, there seemed to be a lot of work going on there, but recently I hadn't seen much going on," she said.

The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality said the site has tank sludge, lead and other contaminants.

A former church near the site was abandoned in 2014 due to concerns; Colton Cheatwood and his family live right next to the site.

"I'm hoping they get in here and clean it up. I'm tired of messing with them around here," Cheatwood said.

In December 2013, the site was placed on the National Priorities List. Since that time, the EPA said it has removed about 1,000 tons of oil waste from one of the former tank locations, has conducted soil samples, and now it has a proposed clean-up plan.

It includes excavating about 30,000 cubic yards of source material and treating nearly 3,000 cubic yards, and disposing of it. The areas excavated will be backfilled with clean soil.

The total cost is about \$4 million.

The EPA said, "The clean-up...takes permanent and effective long-term prevention measures."

In the meantime, Edson said she just hopes that the church is able to reopen and that it is cleaned up.

"It might be years, though. From everything that I've been told, it's not gonna be a small project," she said.

A public meeting to talk about the proposed clean-up plan will take place next Tuesday the Bristow Public Library.



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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-epa-chief-plans-to-stick-with-trumps-priorities-1530919299>

POLITICS

Acting EPA Chief Plans to Stick With Trump's Priorities

Andrew Wheeler says the agency will push for changes in the Clean Power Plan and improve how it deals with polluters and environmental crises



Acting EPA chief Andrew Wheeler was elevated from deputy administrator after Scott Pruitt resigned. PHOTO: ALEX EDELMAN/ZUMA PRESS

By Timothy Puko and Heidi Vogt

Updated July 6, 2018 7:52 p.m. ET

The acting head of the Environmental Protection Agency said Friday he plans to stick with President Donald Trump's priorities, including changing the Clean Power Plan, de-emphasizing climate-change initiatives and improving how the agency deals with polluters and environmental crises.

The agency's new chief, the former coal and energy lobbyist and ex-EPA staffer Andrew Wheeler, said in an interview that the agency won't shift from the direction established by Scott Pruitt, who resigned the post a day earlier amid a series of allegations of ethics and spending lapses.

"If the environmentalists think [Mr. Trump is] going to make promises and we're going to do the opposite, then there's not a lot of common ground to work on," Mr. Wheeler said. "I'm going to continue to move forward with those" priorities Mr. Pruitt laid out on behalf of Mr. Trump.

The White House on Thursday elevated Mr. Wheeler from deputy administrator after Mr. Pruitt resigned in the middle of more than a dozen ethics investigations.

Many in the business community and the GOP have welcomed the EPA's direction in the Trump era, after maintaining that the agency under President Barack Obama was excessive in its

regulatory regimen and stifled business. Environmentalists cheered Mr. Pruitt's departure and have been harshly critical of Mr. Wheeler as a replacement, citing his past work for energy companies.

Mr. Wheeler spent his initial weeks at the agency going to meet career staff in headquarters and at regional offices in part to emphasize how the agency can get better at core Trump administrative initiatives, namely more clarity of permitting and enforcement and better communications with the public.

Mr. Wheeler also said he would like to ratchet down the political rhetoric surrounding the EPA.

"You might see a shift in terms of how I talk about some things," he said. "I have thought for years environmental issues need to be depoliticized. In 1991 when I came to town they were not as politicized as they are today. And I would love to return to that."

Jeff Holmstead, a former EPA official under George W. Bush, said Mr. Wheeler's decades in Washington and experience with the regulatory process mean he may avoid some of Mr. Pruitt's "missteps."

"I think Andy will be much more focused in shepherding these regulatory reforms through EPA as opposed to being out and giving speeches and making press appearances," Mr. Holmstead said.

Environmental groups say Mr. Wheeler isn't much of an improvement over Mr. Pruitt.

"Like Pruitt, this veteran coal lobbyist has shown only disdain for the EPA's vital mission to protect Americans' health and our environment. Make no mistake: we'll fight Wheeler's pollution agenda with the same vigor as we did Pruitt's," Ana Unruh Cohen, head of government affairs at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in a statement.

At the top of Mr. Wheeler's list of priorities, the acting chief said, is giving businesses and the public more certainty on how long it will be before they get decisions on environmental permitting and enforcement.

"I just think we owe it to American business to get those resolved in a shorter time period," he said. "I'm not suggesting we let these people off the hook or that people won't pay fines. But we should be able to give more certainty on the time period."

Mr. Wheeler's other major priority is better communication from the agency about risks to the public. He cited the agency's failings after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, a mine breach in Colorado and the water crises in Flint, Mich., as inspiration for better people with accurate, up-to-date information on health risks.

Mr. Trump came into office promising sweeping changes to the agency. That led to several overhauls from Mr. Pruitt, who started rollbacks on power-plant pollution rules, vehicle-emissions limits, and EPA's power over streams and lakes.

Mr. Wheeler said that he does believe in climate change, but that there are legal limits to what EPA can do about it. And he said he shared the administration's philosophy—long held by many Republicans—of a more narrow view of EPA authority.

Mr. Wheeler referred to his time as limited, but declined to say whether he would take the agency's top role permanently if asked. He would need to be confirmed by the Senate if he were nominated. The Senate confirmed him for the deputy post in April with a 53-45 vote.

"I'm not going to decline or accept a job I haven't been offered," Mr. Wheeler said about taking the post full time. "The president asked me to step in as the acting administrator for the foreseeable future. I don't know how long that will be, but that's up to him."

Among others who might be considered: Donald Van der Vaart, formerly North Carolina's top environmental regulator; Bryan Shaw, environmental regulator in Texas and Mr. Holmstead, who said he had no comment on whether he would consider the position.

Appeared in the July 7, 2018, print edition as 'EPA Chief Says He Won't Shift Priorities.'

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42 homes and business could be dealing with contaminated groundwater in Odessa

Published: Monday, July 9th 2018, 4:57 pm CDT

Updated: Monday, July 9th 2018, 6:54 pm CDT

By Phoenix O'Connor, Multimedia Journalist [CONNECT](#)

ODESSA, TX (KWES) - On Monday, the Environmental Protection Agency updated Ector County Commissioners on chromium contaminated groundwater.

The EPA says about 42 homes and business could be dealing with potential contaminated groundwater in the area of Brazos Street.

Chromium is odorless and colorless, but it can be very harmful if it is used a drinking water.

The contamination was found in a well in 1978.

According to the EPA, chrome-plating operations in the 1960s and 1970s contaminated groundwater with hexavalent chromium. It was named a superfund site and efforts have been made to clean it up, but the EPA says some of it is moving slowly.

"The contamination is moving its really not at levels that are unsafe, but its getting close so we are proposing to provide a water line to ensure that they do not drink contaminated ground water," Carlos Sanchez with the EPA said.

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**BUSINESS**

Truck crash spills more waste from Colorado mine into creek

The Associated Press

July 09, 2018 08:14 PM

Updated July 09, 2018 08:16 PM

SILVERTON, COLO. — A truck hauling waste from a Colorado mine — the source of a 2015 spill that polluted rivers in three states— crashed into a creek on Monday, spilling at least some of its load into the water, authorities said.

The driver was not seriously injured, but about 9 cubic yards (7 cubic meters) of sludge spilled into the water, officials said.

The sludge is a byproduct of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency wastewater treatment plant cleaning up water draining from the inactive Gold King mine near Silverton in southwestern Colorado.

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The agency said previously the sludge is not hazardous. An EPA spokesman didn't immediately respond to a phone call and email after hours Monday.

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Authorities said it did not appear the truck spilled any fuel.

The Gold King was the source of an August 2015 spill that released 3 million gallons (11.4 million liters) of potentially toxic wastewater, polluting rivers in Colorado, New Mexico and Utah and on Native American lands. An EPA-led contractor crew inadvertently triggered the spill while excavating at the mine entrance.

The 2015 spill sent a yellow-orange plume containing arsenic, lead and other toxic metals into waterways, putting the rivers temporarily off-limits for drinking water, farming, rafting and fishing. The EPA said the water quality quickly returned to pre-spill levels.

The EPA installed a temporary treatment plant below the Gold King two months after the spill to clean up wastewater still flowing from the mine.

The plant removes metals from the water before it enters Cement Creek. The truck that crashed Monday slid off the shoulder of a mountain road and dumped the sludge back into the same creek farther downstream.

The EPA had been storing the sludge at the treatment plant but was running out of room. Trucks began hauling it to another site this summer.

The agency designated the area a Superfund site in 2016 but hasn't announced long-term cleanup plans.

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(http://kunm.org/sites/kunm/files/styles/x_large/public/201807/Irrigation_NewMexico.jpg)

Irrigation system in New Mexico

GARY KRAMER USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE VIA WIKIMEDIA / CREATIVE COMMONS

Water Plan Urges Preparation For Dry Times In New Mexico - *By Susan Montoya Bryan, Associated Press*

New Mexico's supply of groundwater should be reserved for periods of drought, communities should have sharing agreements in place when supplies are short and alternatives such as desalination should be explored regardless of the cost.

The recommendations are part of the state's draft water plan released late Monday. The public will have 30 days to comment on the lengthy document.

Updated every five years, the plan acknowledges the growing pressures of drought and climate change on New Mexico's drinking and irrigation supplies.

Despite short-term relief for some areas as the monsoon season kicks into gear, forecasters say it will take more than a single robust rainy season to erase the deficit that has built up due to little winter snowpack and dismal spring runoff.

The water plan also highlights billions of dollars in infrastructure needs.

Congresswoman Says Home State Shouldn't Be Heroin Capital – *Associated Press*

Congresswoman and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Michelle Lujan Grisham is promising to change New Mexico's reputation as the heroin capital of the nation.

Lujan Grisham launched a 30 second video advertisement on Tuesday that says opioids and crime are problems all across New Mexico, and that as governor she would force pharmaceutical companies to "stop pushing opioids and start paying for treatment."

Overdose deaths in New Mexico have hovered well above the national average even as the state has implemented pioneering policies to rein in fatalities. The crisis drew attention this year as President Trump praised an Albuquerque police officer for agreeing to adopt the unborn baby of a pregnant heroin user.

Lujan Grisham's ad says the state reduced overdoses through treatment when she was secretary of health, without citing statistics.

New Mexico Candidate For Governor Pledges Not To Raise Taxes – *Associated Press*

The Republican candidate for governor of New Mexico has signed a pledge to oppose tax increases if elected even as the state struggles to shore up its credit rating and address public pension liabilities.

Congressman and gubernatorial contender Steve Pearce has signed conservative activist Grover Norquist's famous pledge against any net tax increases if elected governor. Norquist and Americans for Tax Reform confirmed the pledge on Sunday.

The promise may be easily kept at first. New Mexico is in the midst of an oil-sector boom that is boosting state government income at current tax rates.

Fiscal analysts warn the anti-tax pledge eventually could limit Pearce's budget-balancing options and result in abrupt state spending cuts.

New Mexico's credit rating was recently downgraded over pension liabilities, Medicaid obligations and more.

Navajo Nation Urges Expansion Of Radiation Exposure Law – *Associated Press*

The Navajo Nation is urging Congress to expand a federal law that compensates people who were exposed to radiation.

Currently, the law covers people who lived downwind from nuclear test sites in Nevada, Arizona and Utah, and workers in the uranium mining industry in a dozen states.

Most claims under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act come from the Four Corners region.

Proposed amendments would expand the cutoff for uranium mining workers from 1971 to 1990.

Navajo officials say those workers were exposed to the same harmful conditions.

Residents of the New Mexico village of Tularosa near the site of the world's first atomic bomb test also want to be covered under the law.

Truck Crash Spills More Waste From Colorado Mine Into Creek – Associated Press

A truck hauling waste from a Colorado mine that caused a massive spill three years ago has crashed into a creek, spilling at least some of its load into the water.

Authorities say the driver wasn't seriously injured in the crash Monday, but about 9 cubic yards of waste sludge spilled into the creek.

The sludge is a byproduct of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency treatment plant cleaning up water draining from the inactive Gold King mine. The EPA has previously said the sludge is not hazardous.

Authorities say it doesn't appear the truck spilled any fuel.

The Gold King was the source of a 2015 spill that released 3 million gallons of potentially toxic wastewater, polluting rivers in Colorado, New Mexico and Utah.

Clint Eastwood Film Set To Begin Production In New Mexico – Associated Press

Production on a Clint Eastwood-directed film about a Mexican cartel is scheduled to begin in New Mexico.

New Mexico Film Office Director Nick Maniatis announced Monday that Eastwood's upcoming feature "The Mule," from Warner Bros. Pictures and Imperative Pictures, will film later this month in Las Cruces.

Starring Clint Eastwood, Bradley Cooper, Laurence Fishburn, and Michael Peña, "The Mule" is the story of Earl Stone, a man in his 80's who is broke, alone and facing foreclosure of his business. He is offered a job that simply requires him to drive. However, unbeknownst to Earl, he signs on as a drug courier for a Mexican cartel.

The New Mexico Film Office says the production will employ around 85 New Mexico crew members and about 200 New Mexico background talent.

New Mexico Forest To Open As Forecast Calls For More Rain – Associated Press

Another New Mexico forest will reopen as recent rains and the start of the monsoon season have helped to ease dry conditions and the threat of wildfire.

The Carson National Forest says trails, campgrounds and other areas across the northern New Mexico forest will open Tuesday morning but restrictions that prohibit campfires will remain in place.

The Santa Fe National Forest opened Monday, and state officials are planning to open Fenton Lake and Hyde Memorial state parks by midweek.

The National Weather Service in Albuquerque reports more afternoon and evening thunderstorms are expected Tuesday in the western and southern portions. That activity is likely to intensify later in the week thanks to a monsoon surge coming up from Mexico.

Still, forecasters acknowledge that the start of the monsoon season has been spotty.

Management Shift Begins At US Nuclear Weapons Lab – *Associated Press*

The U.S. government has cleared the way for a new management team to begin taking over one of the nation's top nuclear weapons laboratories.

The National Nuclear Security Administration issued an official notice to proceed to Triad National Security LLC on Monday, marking the beginning of a transition at Los Alamos National Laboratory that will take four months.

Triad is made up of Ohio-based Battelle Memorial Institute, Texas A&M University and the University of California.

The group was announced in June as the winning bidder of an estimated \$2.5 billion-a-year contract to manage the lab, which was been grappling with safety lapses and missed goals.

Triad has named Thomas Mason as the lab's director designate. He currently serves as senior vice president for Battelle's global lab operations and he's a former director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Navajo Nation Company Buys Partial Ownership In Power Plant – *Associated Press*

Navajo Transitional Energy Company has acquired a 7 percent ownership interest in units 4 and 5 of the Four Corners Power Plant.

NTEC purchased the partial ownership from an affiliate of Arizona Public Service, which operates the coal-fired power plant.

The energy company is owned by the Navajo Nation.

NTEC owns the Navajo Mine south of Fruitland, New Mexico.

Tribal officials say ownership of a power plant is a first for a Navajo Nation enterprise.

APS also entered into an amended and restated coal supply agreement that will govern the power plant's fuel purchases from NTEC.

The deal gives NTEC more flexibility in the sale and purchase of coal from the Navajo Mine.

GOP Names Ex-Trump Officials As New Mexico SOS Candidate – *Santa Fe New Mexican, Associated Press*

A former Trump administration appointee who recently came in third in a GOP congressional primary is now the Republican candidate for New Mexico secretary of state.

The Santa Fe New Mexican reports (http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/gop-taps-candidate-for-secretary-of-state-after-primary-winner/article_910ae1cd-1495-5a5d-9da1-a3ac0552ce35.html) the New Mexico Republican Party's State Central Committee voted Saturday to place Gavin Clarkson on the ballot after previous GOP nominee JoHanna Cox dropped out amid mounting lawsuits.

The 49-year-old Clarkson served as deputy assistant secretary in President Donald Trump's U.S. Interior Department. He resigned in late 2017 after the department's inspector general released a report critical of a tribal loan program he ran.

Clarkson recently filed a wrongful termination lawsuit against New Mexico State University, saying officials unfairly fired him from his position as a business professor when he started his congressional campaign.

Prosecutors Say New Mexico Officer Preyed On Woman, Teen – *Albuquerque Journal, Associated Press*

A New Mexico state police officer is facing charges after prosecutors say he tried to give methamphetamine to a woman and marijuana to a 16-year-old girl.

The Albuquerque Journal reports (<https://www.abqjournal.com/1194173/details-emerge-in-sting-arrest-of-nm-state-police-officer.html>) New Mexico State Police Officer Daniel Capehart is being held at the Cibola County Detention Center on suspicion of distributing marijuana and methamphetamine.

An FBI agent says Capehart pulled over two teenage girls in June and issued citations for marijuana possession. The agent says the 33-year-old Capehart gave a 16-year-old his business card with his personal cell number and started sending the girl flirtatious text messages and pictures of marijuana.

Investigators later arrested Capehart after an undercover sting where authorities say he tried to steal drugs from an officer posing as a drug dealer.

Capehart's attorney, Amy Sirignano, says he was trying to develop sources to fight drug trafficking.

Oil Company Close To Finalizing 3,000 Leases In Carlsbad – *Carlsbad Current-Argus, Associated Press*

An Artesia-based oil company is close to finalizing numerous leases with mineral rights owners in Carlsbad as it moves ahead with plans to drill under the southeastern New Mexico city.

Santo Petroleum got approval from city councilors in 2017 to go door to door and offer residents five-year leases.

The Carlsbad Current-Argus reports (<https://www.currentargus.com/story/news/local/2018/07/06/project-drill-oil-under-carlsbad-moves-forward/761379002/>) the company has obtained about 3,000 leases in the last year, covering the majority of the planned leasing area.

Santo President Hanson Yates says owners were offered a signing bonus up front and a percentage of the subsequent revenue, should the wells prove productive.

Yates says Santo hasn't published a timeline for development due to the complexity of readying such a large number of leases and tracts to drill.

The two biggest leases were with the City of Carlsbad and Carlsbad Municipal Schools.


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